

The meaning of the Cross – Part I

(Introduction and physical aspects): *By Peter Crause*

Note: All scripture quotations in these studies are from the King James version (modified to reflect common English spelling and usage today), of the scriptures.

Gal 6:14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Introduction

Before we attempt to answer this, we should be aware of these facts:

- In Scripture the “Cross of Christ” may refer to the wooden cross on which Jesus was crucified. It may refer to the work of Christ in redemption, whereby the cross is central. It may refer to the effect of that event on our individual lives. Our scripture reference does not primarily refer to the wooden cross, but the total work of Christ Jesus on that cross for the redemption and salvation of mankind.
- Because of what the Cross of Christ accomplished in history – namely the utter defeat of Satan and his hordes, it is one of the most assailed and despised truths by the unbelieving world.
- Unfortunately, many claiming to be “Christian” also reject the teaching of the Cross – since it deals a deathblow to man’s pride, arrogance and self.
- The Cross is the “**Great Divider**”, It divides
 - o The Old Testament or Covenant from the New Testament or Covenant.
 - o BC from AD – even the secular world uses the date everyday acknowledging this fact.
 - o Spiritual death from spiritual life.
 - o Unbelievers from Children of God.
 - o Defeat from victory.
 - o Wrath and condemnation from acceptance and favour.
 - o The first or Adamic creation from the New Creation. (Please note: Jesus is not called the “second Adam” in scripture, but the “Last Adam and the New Man”. Thus the end of the old Adamic creation and the introduction of a new head of the New Creation.)
 - o Within our lives it divides the “Old Man” or old sinful carnal nature, from the “New Man” or new spiritual nature implanted in our spirits at regeneration.
- The Cross has a shame associated with it. Christ’s garment was taken by the Roman soldiers – thus Jesus was naked on that cross.
- “Taking up our cross daily” has nothing to do with sickness, poverty or persecution; but a willingness to apply the effects of the cross – namely death – to our lives in every area, and being utterly dependant on the Lord. There is absolutely nothing in our nature or abilities that is of any value to God. He

judged us in Christ on the wooden cross 2000 years ago and now calls us to put all we have and are on that cross and walk in His Spirit. If our talents haven't passed through the death of the cross they are but "wood, hay and stubble" to God – quite worthless.

- The Cross is a place of judgment. The world, the flesh and the devil were fully and finally judged there. Thus Jesus could cry "Tetalestai" – paid in full. "It is finished" God's final solution for sin and rebellion had been accomplished. Sin, satan and humanity were judged.

The physical aspects of the cross - Crucifixion

From the article at the website below, written by a Physician we see that

- The first known practice of crucifixion was by the Persians.
- Alexander and his generals brought this back to the Mediterranean world -- to Egypt and to Carthage.
- The Romans apparently learned the practice from the Carthaginians and (as with almost everything the Romans did) rapidly developed a very high degree of efficiency and skill at it.
- A number of Roman authors (Livy, Cicer, Tacitus) comment on crucifixion. Several innovations, modifications, and variations are described in the ancient literature.

The writer; describes the physical trauma Jesus suffered. In light of these facts mentioned, it is beyond reason to make the stupid, arrogant claims that both secular and unregenerate theologians make, that Jesus merely "swooned" and was revived in the cold tomb. That he never really died. Very few, if any, could have survived the scourging Jesus endured. Scourging was nicknamed – "The little death". The hatred against the Lord was so intense, that I'm sure those Roman soldiers carried the scourging far beyond what was normally done.

To suggest Jesus Christ never died is absolutely absurd, to say the least. The Roman soldiers who carried out the deed were masters of torture and administering death.

For a view of the complete article, visit:

<http://www.konnections.com/kcundick/crucifix.html>

The Jewish authorities certainly had no doubts that Jesus was dead. They were also fearful that what Jesus had said would come to pass:

Mat 27:62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

Mat 27:63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, "After three days I will rise again".

Mat 27:64 Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, to prevent his disciples coming by night, and stealing him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

Mat 27:65 Pilate said unto them, You have guards: go your way, make *it* as sure as you can.

Mat 27:66 So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a guard.

Matthew 28 recounts the resurrection of Jesus. Note the hypocrisy of the officials:

Mat 28:11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Mat 28:12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

Mat 28:13 Saying, Say, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept.

Mat 28:14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

Mat 28:15 So they took the money, and did as they were instructed: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The **FACT** of the crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus cannot be denied. For 2000 years sinful man has tried using every means at his disposal, to disprove it. The current attack with “The Da Vinci code” and the discovery of the so-called ossuaries of Jesus and his wife and son are absolute fantasy – but an unbelieving world will swallow it as fact. Some would regret or despise what is happening. However, I believe it is a powerful means of weeding out the “mixed multitude” – those nominal “Christians” who hang on for the benefits, but have NEVER been born-again and have no experiential knowledge of the Lord. No one will face persecution and maybe even death, for something he or she really does not believe with complete conviction.

Following studies:

Part II - the Theological implications of the Cross.

Part III - practical and application aspects.